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Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 91: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 91: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/181 (continued) (A/48/689)

1. Mr. MERIMEE (France) said that the debate on an agenda for development provided an opportunity for submitting ideas and proposals to the Secretary-General, but that it was the responsibility of the Secretary-General to prepare the document.

2. The objective of an agenda for development should be to make the concept of development meaningful in a way that reflected the challenges of the end of the century; that should be done by using the many instruments relating to development activities that had been adopted in previous years and by improving modalities for monitoring their implementation, in particular, by considering only a few major themes at each session of the General Assembly. The agenda must also lead to better coordination of activities if it was to be truly operational.

3. The agenda must be global; the concept of development must be broadened to encompass social and environmental aspects, in keeping with the trend that had started with the implementation of Agenda 21. More global policies combining emergency relief reconstruction and development operations must also be designed, drawing on the experience of such bodies as the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Lastly, the agenda must stress the interdependence of human rights promotion, democracy, transparency, the sound management of public affairs, the maintenance of peace and development. That holistic approach must also be accompanied by adherence to the principles of specialization, subsidiarity and delegation to the competent agencies of the system.

4. The agenda must highlight partnership, for the participants in the development process were more varied than they had been in the past. The instruments adopted by the United Nations must therefore reflect that diversity and clarify how States, enterprises, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local communities and the United Nations itself were expected to contribute to that process. Another factor to be taken into account was the growing economic disparity among developing countries, some of which were recording growth rates well above the average while others, in contrast, were becoming increasingly marginalized.

5. Such a partnership must be based on sharing the burden of development with the most economically advanced countries and then according priority to the least developed countries and to Africa, without underestimating the needs of the countries in transition and the middle-income countries.

(Mr. Merimee, France)

6. Since the Bretton Woods institutions' scope of activity had expanded, the United Nations must strike a balance in its cooperation with those partners. To that partnership the United Nations brought the authority it had by virtue of its cardinal principles: universality, neutrality, equality of Member States and consensus. As it was not subject to the same financial rules as the Bretton Woods institutions or to the same constraints, the United Nations could perceive human development and sustainable development in a different light; its task was to synthesize development activities.

7. The agenda should be structured around three main functions. First, the conceptual framework of United Nations activities must be defined by drawing in particular on the work done in the fields of population and statistics. Activities in that area were essential to the achievement of a long-term vision of development. Certain relationships warranted in-depth study, such as the relationships between population, growth and employment.

8. It must be recognized that the United Nations did not necessarily have all the capacities needed to operate in certain areas. Consideration might therefore be given to joint studies or surveys by the Organization and the international financial institutions, for example, in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Organization must also have access to evaluations that would let it correct its analysis and modify its activities; the agenda must pay due attention to that function.

9. The agenda would also have a vital role to play in international consensus-building, which the Organization could achieve only if it refrained from spreading itself too thin in a plethora of negotiations grown increasingly difficult as the number of Member States and spheres of activity had grown, and if it entered into negotiations only when there had been adequate preparation for a consensus among Member States and the number of major issues had been limited. For while the United Nations was clearly the chief universal forum for the negotiation of human and social issues pertaining to development, that was not true where other issues were concerned. The agendas of the Second Committee and the Economic and Social Council must be streamlined and the methods of work of those bodies must be reviewed within the framework of the institutional revitalization of the development bodies.

10. The agenda must also enhance the effectiveness programmes in the field. The reform of operational activities was essential to the future of United Nations development activities; the agenda must help to clarify existing problems and the solutions to be applied, in particular, by improving the coordination of programmes in the field and drawing on a revitalized UNDP. It was to be hoped that the debate on that question would be continued during the coming months, particularly within the framework of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council to be held at the beginning of the Council's substantive session of 1994.

11. Ms. GRANT (United Kingdom) said that the agenda provided an opportunity for the United Nations to reclaim its place at the forefront of development; the agenda should be realistic, forward-looking and well-focused and recognize that economic, social and environmental policies were closely interlinked and complementary. Moreover, the document was clearly indissociable from "An Agenda for Peace", for peace was an essential precondition for sustainable human development.

12. Rather than trying to develop a new approach, it would be preferable to build on the lessons drawn from decades of development, for many of the elements of the agenda were already contained in Agenda 21 and could be encapsulated in the concept of "sustainable human development". It had come to be recognized that the developing countries themselves had primary responsibility for managing their own human development, but that that could be achieved only if their populations were included in the decision-making process by means of democratic institutions. Governments must also make the best use of their scarce resources and create a climate favourable to private initiative and foreign investment.

13. The agenda should also propose innovative means of creating a supportive international environment. As pointed out in the UNDP Human Development Report, a more open international trading environment would make a much greater contribution to promoting development than official aid flows. Possibilities for a closer, better defined partnership between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, other international organizations and Member States must be explored. The future of international development cooperation lay in an integrated approach to development, in which all the participants collaborated and had a clear idea of their respective roles. In that partnership, the neutrality and universality of the United Nations were important assets, but they were not enough. An agenda for development must clearly define the role of the United Nations, identifying both its limitations and its comparative advantages. That role might be modest, but what was important was that it should be realistic.

14. In that enterprise, recipient countries must involve all sectors of society in designing and implementing development strategies. They needed to give more priority to investing in human resources, national capacity-building, promoting good governance at all levels and encouraging respect for human rights and pluralism.

15. Donor countries should target their assistance on recipient countries' real needs, focusing on poverty reduction and environmental protection. They needed to work on a more coordinated approach to multilateral and bilateral aid and to promote a freer international trading environment. Official development assistance should be focused on investment in human resources and capacity-building.

(Ms. Grant, United Kingdom)

16. Lastly, United Nations agencies should re-examine their role and functioning to ensure that their assistance was focused on real needs. The United Nations must strengthen further its field structure, ensuring a more integrated response to the needs of recipient countries and closer collaboration with the World Bank, the regional development banks and other relevant institutions.

17. Development and human rights were mutually reinforcing, and it was therefore essential that sustainable human development should be recognized as both promoting and requiring fundamental freedoms and a democratic society. The United Nations should enhance the participation of groups that had often been neglected, including NGOs, women, and small-scale entrepreneurs, in the development process.

18. Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal) said that with the end of the cold war, the developing countries had hoped that the peace dividend would allow them to alleviate poverty and resume growth. Accordingly, most of them had accelerated their efforts to implement reforms in the areas of democracy and human rights, structural adjustments and open markets. External resources had shrunk, however, and those countries were currently confronted with an unfavourable trade environment. Some of the resources released after the cold war had actually been applied to new conflict situations, where they were used for humanitarian assistance, inter alia. A peaceful and prosperous global society thus remained as distant as ever.

19. The Group of 77 had proposed the initiative of preparing an agenda for development, whose importance the Secretary-General had underlined in his report on the work of the Organization in 1992. The General Assembly had endorsed that proposal in its resolution 47/181, which had requested him to submit a report, taking fully into consideration the objectives and agreements adopted by the Assembly, containing an analysis of and recommendations on ways to enhance the role of the Organization and its relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions in the promotion of international cooperation for development.

20. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization which had been issued in September 1993 was not specific in that regard. It indicated only that the final report on the agenda for development would set guidelines for future United Nations action in the economic and social fields. His note (A/48/689), which referred to actions taken in response to the resolution, was likewise silent on ways to enhance the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

21. The agenda for development should bridge the gaps existing in the implementation of agreed programmes of action such as the International Development Strategy and Agenda 21. There were many international agreements in the economic and social fields which lacked the necessary support for their successful implementation. Better definition of the linkages among the international agreements would avoid waste of resources and promote a proper understanding of the practical implementation of development initiatives.

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

22. It might also be necessary to adjust some activities themselves in the light of present-day realities. The very meaning of development had evolved and was no longer centred on economic growth but on human development. It was clear that all current problems relating to the environment, population and social intolerance were the result of inadequate support in that area. The economic and social agendas of the United Nations should pay particular attention to the problems of both the least developed and land-locked countries, whose economic condition had continued to worsen. Lastly, since peace and development were indivisible, the new agenda should integrate all political, economic and social questions.

23. Mr. ARELLANO (Mexico) said that, as the Charter of the United Nations stipulated, one of the Organization's principal purposes was to achieve international cooperation for development. A vast mechanism for promoting growth and development in disadvantaged countries had been implemented and various initiatives had been adopted to support the developing countries' own efforts, which, unfortunately, had not always achieved their goals. The gap between developing and industrialized countries was in fact widening. Consequently, one of the international community's principal tasks at the dawn of the new century was to correct those imbalances. The United Nations should consider economic and social development its primary goal.

24. History had shown that political stability and social tranquillity could not be preserved unless economic problems were resolved and that poverty, unemployment and social inequalities were often at the root of both domestic and foreign conflicts.

25. Since economic growth fuelled development, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's note which was balanced and took into account Mexico's opinions on such issues as the importance of financial, commercial and technical questions. As the Secretary-General had emphasized, development had lost its former standing on national agendas and was in danger of being neglected in favour of short-term imperatives. The agenda should reverse that trend and guide the international community towards an acceleration of the economic and social development of all peoples through existing agreements and the forging of a consensus to combat poverty and associate economic efficiency with social justice.

26. To avoid any wasting of resources, the agenda should be comprehensive and enhance coordination between the various United Nations bodies in the economic and social fields. From an operational standpoint, conditions conducive to long-term growth and social development in developing countries must be established.

27. Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada) said that her country warmly welcomed the idea of an agenda for development, which posed an even greater challenge than "An Agenda for Peace". Even if the reasons which had led to its preparation were varied, Canada believed that its single objective was to provide a clear vision of the economic and social mission of the United Nations from which clear priorities for the Organization's activities would emerge.

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

28. By virtue of the Charter, the United Nations system was the only entity that could lay claim to a truly global social, economic, cultural, humanitarian and political mission which touched on every aspect of development.

29. The United Nations had all the qualifications needed to undertake a task of that scope. Over the years it had accumulated unprecedented experience, which should serve as a basis for the elaboration, in response to the challenges of the modern world, of a new conceptual framework.

30. While the fundamental concepts remained the same - development, the empowerment of women, human security, social justice - they should be better interrelated and their relevance to the immediate needs of development should be demonstrated. So-called "areas of consensus" were already emerging in favour of a blending together of sustainable and human development. Sustainable human development should thus be the pivotal point for the construction and organization of the agenda.

31. For that reason, it would be pointless to limit the exercise to the traditional questions of aid. In that context, Canada shared the view of the Secretary-General that economic and social research, policy analysis, operational activities, humanitarian assistance and human rights advocacy were mutually complementary and reinforcing. Sustainable human development appeared to be the point of convergence where the economic and the social came together.

32. If the general thrust of an agenda for development was towards "the human and the sustainable", the conclusions drawn by the United Nations system should be expressed in terms of priorities. He noted that several ideas had already been put forward, such as the allocation of 20 per cent of national budgets to basic health and education. The World Summit for Social Development should lead to the fixing of new objectives, orientations and agreements in the social and economic sphere, thus demonstrating the diverse paths which could be followed in elaborating an agenda for development.

33. For Canada, that agenda amounted to a vast exercise in choosing priorities for the United Nations system. Those priorities must be translated into a very clear master plan which could then serve as a frame of reference for national policies and as a source of inspiration for international cooperation. Above all, the United Nations system must draw lessons from the setting of those new priorities.

34. In setting clear priorities, efforts could be made to counter the tendency for the energies and resources of the United Nations system to be dispersed among an excessive number of programmes, organs and institutions. An agenda for development should therefore provide fresh impetus for efforts to align reform with the new objectives and priorities. A rigorous analysis of the comparative advantages afforded by the United Nations economic and social system must serve as a basis for identifying the specific tasks which the United Nations could usefully perform and those which it should deliberately leave to others. That did not mean that its role should be reduced. For example, its capabilities for

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

economic research and analysis should undoubtedly be enhanced. A new role should therefore be defined for the United Nations, geared more closely to the social dimension of the economic policy, while still governed by the principles of complementarity, harmonization and cooperation.

35. Canada hoped that the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General in early 1994 would be more substantial and fleshed out than the note under consideration, which was none the less a good starting-point. It should include a draft plan and some general orientations, behind which a more precise common thread could be discerned. Sustainable development, centred on the person, should be the underlying concept for the entire proposal.

36. Canada was determined to participate fully in that ambitious exercise, which was of fundamental importance because it called for solidarity, human values and simple dignity. It was vital to ensure that the agenda would be an agenda not of the developed or of the developing countries, but one for all people.

37. Mr. BORCHARD (Germany) stressed the close link between peace-keeping and combating the causes of conflicts. The future agenda for development should therefore be placed side by side with "An Agenda for Peace". As the Secretary-General had stated in his report, an agenda for development should address "the deeper foundations of global peace and security in the economic, social and environmental spheres".

38. An agenda for development should serve as a framework to encourage reform in the United Nations system. As an open and working agenda, it should facilitate the promotion of new ideas and the opening of dialogue and should provide orientations for the entire international community.

39. It should improve coordination both within and beyond the United Nations system. It should deal with relations between donors, recipients and the United Nations system. If aid was used in a responsible way, donors would be all the readier to assist.

40. The greatest challenge faced by the international community today was the alleviation of poverty. While a great deal had already been done, practical solutions and organizational adjustments in developing countries were still needed. Popular participation should be increased since it promoted the creation of democratic structures and respect for human rights. Particular attention should be given to capacity-building in those countries.

41. It was clear that there was a direct relation between an agenda for development and "An Agenda for Peace", when moving from emergency assistance to rehabilitation and to long-term development - the so-called "continuum". Peace within and among countries was based on sustainable economic and social development. Germany, together with its partners in the European Union, would support all efforts by the Secretary-General to give the new agenda a real and practical meaning.

42. Mr. MSENGEZI (Zimbabwe) recalled the recent statement by the Secretary-General that the preservation of peace was contingent upon the elimination of economic injustice and the existence of opportunities for economic advancement. He subscribed fully to that observation. He stressed that the end of the cold war had given the international community a unique opportunity to develop a framework for enhanced international cooperation for development. The discussion of an agenda for development was therefore very timely.

43. While many problems - economic growth, international trade, commodity prices, transfer of resources and technology, external debt - clearly remained relevant, a new need had arisen for those problems no longer to be addressed in isolation, since they were closely interlinked. Any agenda for development should therefore be based on an integrated approach and should be people-centred, addressing such varied human development indicators as life expectancy, literacy and child mortality.

44. He shared the view of the Secretary-General that an agenda for development should not attempt to propound a new macroeconomic theory, nor to present an analysis of the world economy, nor to give new form to the many programmes, strategies and declarations and agreements already entered into; it should draw on those instruments as far as possible. The forthcoming conferences on population, women and social development should further advance the cause of the agenda.

45. His delegation was in large agreement with the fundamental elements and themes which the Secretary-General laid out in Part III of the note. It fully agreed with the Secretary-General's conclusion that development must be seen as a shared concern of all nations, rich and poor, whatever their orientations.

46. The note drew an analogy between the particular problems being faced by the Eastern European countries in transition and the developing countries. However, although some common features did exist between them, their general situation was very different. Priority should be accorded to the developing countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, especially with regard to transfers of resources. The international community must guard against diversion of attention and resources from those regions, which could only spell the complete doom of any agenda for development.

47. Mr. SIDI (Nigeria) said that with the end of the cold war and at a time when nations had come to embrace the philosophy of multilateral diplomacy and were expressing stronger faith in interdependency, the discussion on an agenda for development was most timely.

48. The decision by the United Nations to reflect on that question stemmed from the realization that it was only by focusing on developmental concerns, in particular poverty alleviation, that the global problems of instability and insecurity could be addressed. Peace and development could not be dissociated. The causes of instability were firmly rooted in social inequity, degradation of the environment and poverty. An agenda for development must therefore be part of a peace process.

(Mr. Sidi, Nigeria)

49. The conceptual framework for an agenda for development should be precise, well-targeted and of a universal nature. It should integrate all the political-economic, social and environmental issues and be a mechanism capable of addressing key issues and helping countries face developmental challenges. With the end of the cold war, the international community had the opportunity to generate the resources required for development, with will and commitment by every nation. The savings from reduced military expenditures and disarmament efforts would yield dividends that could be used to meet the more urgent need for development.

50. In that endeavour, technology was an important component of an agenda for development. The technological gap between North and South must be reduced. In an interdependent world all actors, rich and poor alike, must be able to make their contribution in an independent fashion.

51. Similarly, for there to be peaceful coexistence among nations, international cooperation should be promoted through free interaction among nations. The resolving of issues such as trade and investment, commodity prices, removal of trade barriers and the fostering of greater technological cooperation would promote global economic growth.

52. The idea of an agenda for development was not new. Such programmes existed in different forms. The United Nations had developed various agreements and strategies which, although still valid, had not been fully implemented. An agenda for development should not seek to replace those initiatives but should seek to reaffirm them and ensure their implementation.

53. Mr. BUTLER (Australia) said that there were several reasons for the establishment of a new agenda for development: the Member States of the United Nations had pledged to promote global economic, social and human development; the old programmes had become obsolete; the nature of economic and social interaction had changed dramatically, becoming universal, and finally, if the United Nations failed to respond to those new circumstances it would fail in its mission or at best only partially respond to the world's expectations.

54. The preparation of a new agenda for development was a complex task. The first and last of the reasons he had mentioned could be taken together because they formed a continuum between the welfare of people and the security of States. Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations laid down the obligation to create "conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations". That meant that development was essential to the maintenance of peace. To date, the United Nations had played a leading role in the maintenance of international security, but the same could not be said of its role in development. That inequality should be brought to an end.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

55. The second and third of the reasons to which he had referred were also connected. The past agenda was obsolete and the new circumstances required a new approach. However, it would be wrong to fail to recognize the achievements of the past four decades of cooperation for development, in a broad range of fields. Yet significant change was required, for the world itself had changed and past efforts had not always borne sufficient fruit.

56. An agenda for development was needed which recognized that development was not simply a question of transfer of finances or other resources from the rich countries to the poor countries. Development was the process by which people were able to achieve a decent standard of living and a better life for themselves and their children.

57. Development was above all a partnership, in the first place between the individual and society. It might also involve other States or agencies or even private firms in the framework of international cooperation.

58. The development partnership took on a global dimension when it was recognized that many of the obstacles to development - unemployment and underemployment, for example - were now hitting the rich countries as hard as the developing countries. In fact, the world was witnessing a universalization of those problems.

59. All of the foregoing suggested that a key part of the new agenda for development should be a new framework for looking at and approaching development issues. That framework should be based on mutual interest rather than charity and should recognize that shifting economic realities required effective partnership. The new agenda should also reconfirm the fact that development was fundamentally about people. If people were to be the focus of development, it was clear that the principal obstacle was poverty and that the overriding goal of any development effort should be to eliminate poverty, regardless of its cause.

60. His delegation appreciated the thoroughness of the progress report by the Secretary-General on an agenda for development. It did not see the agenda as substituting for the range of relevant programmes, agreements and statements developed in recent years in the United Nations system, or for those being planned. Rather, it saw it as a major aspect of the establishment of a coordinating mechanism for developmental activity throughout the United Nations system in a manner which would give added impetus and coherence to the other programmes. The agenda should serve as a link between the various aspects of the development mandate of the United Nations, just as "An Agenda for Peace" had drawn together a range of issues from the Organization's peace and security mandate.

61. Australia, which had joined the sponsors of a draft resolution on the renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation, saw that dialogue as a necessary adjunct to the agenda for development.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

62. In view of the crucial questions being faced by every human being throughout the world, especially in the areas of health, education and employment, it was to be hoped that an agenda for development would help the United Nations system to provide the appropriate answers.

63. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that he was in favour of having the report of the Secretary-General on an agenda for development issued in early 1994 and of having the issue included in the agendas of the following sessions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. That document must reflect the basic principles of the United Nations and address long-term socio-economic needs rather than those of the mid-1990s. The work being done in other organs of the United Nations or in other intergovernmental conferences must not be duplicated. The international community was currently implementing existing agreements such as the numerous declarations adopted over the past few years. An agenda for development should therefore not seek to establish new agreements; it should be an instrument for integrating new areas regarding which the consensus was that action was needed, into an overall framework and should provide the basis for strengthening coordination of activities within the United Nations system.

64. During the previous decade, quite a few developing countries had managed to achieve self-reliance. As the situation of those countries had become more varied, so, in addressing development as a global issue, it was necessary to respond to that diversity. The success of countries that had become self-sufficient must be analysed. Little attention had been devoted so far to the efforts made by those countries in terms of good governance, structural adjustment, pattern of fiscal expenditure and interrelationship between the protection of human rights, democracy and development.

65. Mr. CHEN Jian (China) said that the end of the cold war had not brought peace and development to the world. It had, however, had important consequences for the international community. For the developing countries there had been no improvement in their external environment and, despite their efforts to readjust their economies, their future still looked grim. On the international cooperation agenda, development had been further marginalized; it must be restored to the top of the international community's agenda.

66. An agenda for development should aim at revitalizing economic growth which was the mainspring of development. Many international instruments had been adopted in recent years and they should be a source of inspiration and guidance for the new agenda. It should synthesize the purposes, principles and policy measures of those instruments, identify the main obstacles to their implementation and put forward specific and practical recommendations. It should promote comprehensive international cooperation on the basis of interdependence, mutual benefit and shared responsibilities. It should, in particular, urge the developed countries to adopt far-sighted policies, speed up economic structural adjustment and earnestly fulfil their commitments in such fields as trade, monetary policies and sustainable development; developing

(Mr. Chen Jian, China)

countries, for their part, should make renewed efforts in their pursuit of development and strengthen South-South cooperation. Developing countries should no longer be marginalized when it comes to international economic decisions. All countries, rich or poor, strong or weak, must participate, on an equal footing, in the international community's decisions.

67. An agenda for development should recognize the differences in levels of development, cultural traditions and social systems of different countries. It should respect the right of each country to choose its own model of development. Indeed, sustainable development could only be achieved if it was based on development strategies and policies selected by the country itself in line with its specific national conditions. The agenda should fully reflect that historical experience and make it a premise for international cooperation for development. Human understanding of development evolved over time and the agenda should integrate new areas and reflect new problems in development cooperation while upholding the key links between economic growth and social and cultural progress. Otherwise, improvement in standards of living would only be a mirage. The vicious circle of overpopulation, poverty and environmental degradation must also be broken.

68. The agenda should also contain concrete and effective measures to strengthen the unique and positive role of the United Nations in the field of development. Peace-keeping must not be promoted at the expense of development-related activities and the United Nations system must be made financially and institutionally more responsive to the needs of developing countries. The agenda should be action-oriented and realistic. It should avoid introducing any element that was not conducive to cooperation for development. The agenda's formulation should be based on wide-ranging consultations with Member States, the developing countries in particular, in order to bridge differences and widen the common ground.

69. Mr. HAMBURGER (Netherlands) said that the agenda for development should not be another comprehensive negotiated document. It should be a concise and practical document that translated emerging development concepts such as those contained in Agenda 21 or the Cartagena Commitment into manageable guidelines in the field of development, primarily, but not necessarily limited to, the United Nations system. It should be flexible enough to incorporate later on, elements emanating from the main findings of the forthcoming major conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and the World Summit for Social Development.

70. His delegation proposed that the following priority components should be included in an agenda for development: (a) the fight against poverty from the bottom up, with emphasis on promoting people's economic self-reliance; (b) specific action to reduce economic inequalities which were often the result of people having no access to basic services; (c) in each sector priority should be given to development cooperation activities that benefited directly the

(Mr. Hamburger, Netherlands)

weaker sections of the population by focusing attention on primary education, primary health care, mother and child care, food security, integrated rural development, the fight against urban poverty and the promotion of small-scale indigenous industries; (d) ecologically sustainable development; developed countries for their part should establish patterns of production and consumption that reduced the demands they made on the world's scarce natural resources; (e) reduction of the world's population growth; (f) removal of the ecological, political and socio-economic factors that triggered migration and adoption of measures to better assist migrants; (g) priority to be given to freedom, democracy and human rights as preconditions for socio-economic development, market access, participation in the political system and establishment of a transparent legal system and a sound administration; (h) promotion of physical, economic, social and cultural autonomy of women; (i) achievement of peace by preventing or by settling violent conflicts, including those of a religious, nationalistic, cultural or ethnic character between nations or within societies; (j) strengthening or reforming of international economic relations, inter alia, by strengthening multilateral cooperation; (k) coordination of development aid and international trade policy on the one hand, and financial policy on the other, in order to promote economic self-reliance; and (l) adjustment of the economic structures of developing countries in order to achieve a better equilibrium and promote investment in economic growth. Those priorities were based on the recognition of global interdependence in many fields. Problems were no longer confined to a geographically determined area in the South.

71. His delegation was looking forward to participating, together with its partners of the European Union, in the elaboration of a practical instrument that would effectively promote development in all its facets.

72. Mr. RAHIM (Malaysia) said that the agenda for development must address both the conceptual framework of United Nations actions and the effectiveness of programme delivery; it must design a new concept of sustainable human development. The apprehensions of the developing countries were many - while rich countries were getting richer, one fifth of the world's population continued to live in poverty and hunger. There was an extreme concentration of capital, technological resources and decision-making, and the gap between the developed countries and the developing countries continued to widen. Yet it was the poor who were unjustly blamed for depleting natural resources and contributing to environmental degradation.

73. The agenda for development should be based on a comprehensive analysis of current problems, including quantitative and qualitative aspects. The deliberations leading to its adoption must be transparent, participatory and free of preconceptions or vested interests. They must be democratic and open, so as to ensure an objective, specific and effective outcome. The elaboration of the agenda should be based on the major instruments already adopted, such as Agenda 21, and should also take into account the preparations for forthcoming conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development

(Mr. Rahim, Malaysia)

and the World Summit for Social Development. The agenda for development must build upon existing and future initiatives, taking stock of what had been accomplished and defining new perspectives and objectives, while also seeking to secure the necessary resources and commitments.

74. There were four major clusters of issues which must be given consideration in the agenda, beginning with conceptual issues. The end of the cold war had posed new challenges: the current turmoil in countries in transition, the marginalization of many developing countries, the increasingly heavy debt burden, the various social ills - poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and disease such as the AIDS pandemic - should be addressed, along with the problem of civil strife and political disorder affecting some countries. Against that backdrop, the current problem of economic stagnation and negative growth rates in some major industrial economies was contributing to socio-economic difficulties, such as unemployment and social unrest. Depletion of natural resources and severe environmental pollution threatened the very existence of civilization. In order to face those challenges, a comprehensive redefinition of development models would be needed. The current dogmas of the pre-eminence of the market approach and market-based democracy deserved careful and detailed scrutiny in order to identify their shortcomings and limits. The same was true for the various principles governing international exchanges in trade and finance and development cooperation, which had a de facto influence on the current acute structural economic imbalances. The active participation of all Member States and of the Bretton Woods institutions must be sought and the latter's effectiveness in addressing development issues should be reviewed.

75. Secondly, it was necessary to strengthen the various development institutions at the multilateral level and institutional capacity-building at the country level. The objective was to improve effectiveness of policy formulation, goals, programme implementation and also review and evaluation. Some successful development models could be reproduced, but local imperatives must be synthesized in order to determine their relevance and practicality.

76. The third type of problem involved means of implementation, which should not be confined to direct transfer of resources but should aim at establishing a favourable international economic environment. Capital flows should promote growth and direct investment in the field of technological cooperation and promote a liberal international trade regime and human resource development. Direct transfer of resources, however, would be justified in certain cases, for example, when addressing humanitarian emergencies and acute social problems such as hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy and serious diseases as well as when specific commitments had been made, as in the implementation of Agenda 21. Consideration of resources should be based on objective criteria in order to promote growth and development, and not on political considerations. Official development assistance should be of the highest quality and must be targeted only to development and socio-economic welfare.

(Mr. Rahim, Malaysia)

77. The fourth issue had to do with the selection of priority themes: trade and development, science and technology, human resources development and financial flows. Trade liberalization was an ongoing issue, but serious problems remained: unfair trade practices, agricultural subsidies, unfavourable terms of trade, unfair competition, and problems related to the formation of regional trading blocs which could impede the liberalization of trade. In the area of science and technology, the major issue was the establishment of a new framework for technology cooperation, the promotion of endogenous technologies, sharing of knowledge and use of new and emerging technologies. Excessive concentration of technological resources put the developing countries at an extreme disadvantage. With respect to human resources development, the focus should be on assistance to education, training and entrepreneurship. In the area of resource flows, the issue of debt overhang must be addressed, foreign investment increased and investment of venture capital encouraged.

78. In conclusion, the agenda for development must seek to improve the global economic order, to correct acute imbalances and to secure a higher standard of living for all. That instrument would provide the opportunity to design a new global compact to ensure sustainable human development for all in a peaceful world. Malaysia intended to contribute fully to its elaboration.

79. Mr. FULCI (Italy) said that the note of the Secretary-General contained many useful ideas; he agreed with the proposed timetable for the preparation of the agenda and with the recommendation for the inclusion of that important theme on the agendas of the forthcoming sessions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

80. As the Secretary-General had observed, there was a need for better integration of United Nations activities in the political, economic and social fields and to translate into action the widespread recognition that peace and security must be founded on economic growth and sustainable development.

81. Moreover, as stated in the note, the agenda for development should not attempt to provide a new macroeconomic theory or seek to present an exhaustive analysis of the world economy, but to propose a few well-focused priorities for international cooperation for development, designed to define better the place of the activities of the United Nations system in the promotion of peace and development. Those priorities were at the core of a growing consensus on development strategies which included sustainable development, the central role of democracy and human rights and human resource development. Various intergovernmental instruments on those issues already existed and should be taken advantage of.

82. It was essential to strengthen the effectiveness of United Nations system activities in the economic and social sectors. Italy was encouraged by the successful outcome of the negotiations on their restructuring.

(Mr. Fulci, Italy)

83. One of the pivotal elements of the note of the Secretary-General was the view that the agenda should provide a substantive basis to strengthen coordination of activities within the United Nations system. An effort must be made to define the methods that would allow the United Nations to contribute more effectively to the promotion of peace and development. Cooperation between the United Nations system and the international financial institutions must also be improved, especially with regard to the programmes designed to meet the needs of the least developed countries, particularly in Africa.

84. With regard to the specific requirements of countries recovering from a conflict, Mozambique offered a valuable example of the synergy between the political, peace-keeping, humanitarian, and development components of United Nations activities. In the case of countries where conflict was rife, useful lessons could be drawn from recent experience, for example, Angola and Somalia.

85. Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, regretted that time constraints had prevented an in-depth discussion of the Secretary-General's note on an agenda for development; the Nordic countries believed that the primary purpose of such an agenda was to draw up a vision for the future and a clear and unified strategic framework for sustained United Nations action in the development arena. The final report should be considerably more forward-looking. It should propose other mechanisms for addressing current and future problems. The agenda, which should be the beginning of a process rather than an end in itself, should stimulate new thinking, nationally as well as internationally, and should clearly define the future role of the United Nations vis-à-vis other participants in the development process. It should provide the system with greater unity of action and purpose. It should be action-oriented and concise and contain clear conclusions and recommendations so as to facilitate decision-making at the national, intergovernmental and non-governmental levels and within the United Nations system itself. The agenda for development could also provide an overall framework for new areas of consensus based on Agenda 21, but it should not be a negotiating document. However, the report could raise issues that would encourage consensus, for example, during the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development.

86. The starting-point should be a rethinking of the concept of development itself, based on existing studies and analyses. Since development was to be people-centred, human rights, democracy and popular participation were integrally linked to it.

87. Development must be sustainable. It could no longer be viewed solely in economic terms; the concept of growth must be adapted to concerns for environmental sustainability and social justice. Population was another important issue, as was migration. As a consequence of the interdependence of nations, the control that national Governments could exert over their economies and economic policies tended to diminish, while the need for structural

(Mr. Breitenstein, Finland)

adjustment and the harmonization of economic policies increased. Yet it was unclear what constituted the guiding mechanisms for such global phenomena, which affected the international economic environment and greatly influenced the development prospects of individual countries.

88. Development had become a global issue and was no longer one of North-South relations. The situation in different regions revealed great diversity as well as one persistent global problem that concerned all countries. Some developing regions had dynamic economies; Africa, on the other hand, faced numerous political, economic, ecological and human problems, and its case required special attention. The same could be said of countries in transition, those that had been victims of natural disasters and those that were involved in a conflict or recovering from one. Their development needs were special and not accounted for in traditional development theory, and should thus be considered in the agenda for development. The agenda should not, however, disregard the problems of the more advanced countries, which often had a significant global effect. Development problems tended to be eclipsed by short-term imperatives. That trend must be reversed. The United Nations seemed to be the best forum for restoring the issue of development to a prominent place on the world agenda, and the agenda for development seemed to provide a perfect tool for doing so.

89. But development was also a national concern. Traditional approaches to development had failed to transform the poor countries, and one had to wonder why. In a search for new avenues, the Nordic countries wished to stress the need for a better understanding of the respective roles of government and market forces in the development process and to reaffirm the necessity of good governance. Development required intellectual, financial and technological resources, but responsibility for mobilizing those resources lay with the countries themselves. Intellectual resources should come from investment in people, which would lead to human development.

90. Financial resources should be derived from the mobilization of domestic resources, trade and foreign investment, but also from external development assistance, which by definition should be a supplement. Aid was essential, particularly, aid to the least developed countries, yet the Nordic countries believed that an agenda for development should not be reduced to a new instrument for arguing for increased aid. It could, however, stimulate an in-depth discussion on development cooperation, within the framework of a revitalized Economic and Social Council. It was necessary, for instance, to discuss the current modes of development cooperation, to decide whether they were conducive to the transformation of developing countries into market-economy countries, and to ascertain whether the current modes of aid really supported market mechanisms in economies which had already taken that road. Access to technology was a determining factor for economic growth. Determining the right policies, however, was a precondition for accelerated human development and for obtaining the necessary technology. Finally, development was interlinked with political stability and peace; conversely, there could be no lasting peace while poverty and flagrant economic disparities, human rights violations and social injustice prevailed.

(Mr. Breitenstein, Finland)

91. The agenda for development should lead to the consideration at the national and international levels of more effective approaches to development. Yet development was such a large and complex issue that it seemed impossible to cover all its aspects in a single document. For the report to be useful and action-oriented, it should define responsibilities, particularly that of the United Nations, or else it would remain vague and academic. It was important to identify the priority themes for United Nations activities; the Organization should enhance its policy-guidance role at the national and regional levels and its policy-harmonization role at the international level, and it should define its role in development more sharply. The Nordic countries believed that the recently agreed restructuring of the Organization's economic and social sectors was a first step in that direction.

92. Preparation of the agenda for development was an ambitious task of historic importance requiring bold action on the part of the Secretary-General. The process would in itself be an instrument for coordination and clarifying purposes. The follow-up work after the adoption of the agenda would constitute an important challenge for the entire system, but greater unity of action would only help the United Nations to stand the test and claim its rightful role in the development process.

93. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that with the end of East-West confrontation, the international community now had an opportunity to build a better world in which individuals and societies could flourish in political, economic and cultural diversity.

94. While materialistic ideologies advocating social models, based on a denial of the individual were falling apart, modes of thinking and economic and social organization based on individual freedom, the market economy and democracy were gradually gaining universal acceptance.

95. The interdependence of national economies was increasing, while an unprecedented internationalization was eroding the autonomy of national decision-making centres, particularly within the nation-State, which had to deal with external factors over which it had no control. All this was accompanied by a globalization of problems whose solution called for concerted international action through international organizations.

96. For the first time, conflict prevention and settlement appeared to be within the reach of the international community, dialogue and cooperation were being enhanced, the "peace dividend" was materializing and, despite resistance from some quarters, respect for human rights was becoming universal, while a market economy and freedom of association were being recognized as models of economic and social organization.

97. However, the post-cold-war era was not only full of promise; it was also creating a number of difficulties stemming from the conflicts to which the collapse of some States had given rise, weapons proliferation, the painful process of transition in Eastern Europe and the substantial decline in living standards in most developing countries.

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

98. An agenda for development, which the Group of 77 endorsed wholeheartedly, should meet three basic concerns: first, it should place development, once again, at the centre of United Nations activities, so that the Organization could foster conditions conducive to the consolidation of peace; it should also contain proposals for overcoming the widening gap between the North and the South, especially in the area of technology; and, lastly, it should redress the structural imbalances in the world economy by strengthening multilateral monitoring mechanisms.

99. In that context, there was a need to rectify the current trend towards making reductive themes, such as poverty and the environment, the focus of United Nations activities, so as to encompass, in a comprehensive manner, the economic issues vital to North-South relations, such as international trade, finance, investment, external debt, commodities and the transfer of technology.

100. The Secretary-General should make specific proposals for strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council in the identification of international economic situations liable to have adverse effects on international peace and security.

101. Moreover, it was to be hoped that the agenda for development would contain proposals aimed at averting the growing danger of the role of the economic and social organs of the United Nations being eclipsed by that of the Bretton Woods institutions. Lastly, the document should restore to the United Nations its status as a forum in which the values of equity and neutrality prevailed, and in which weaker countries could assert their legitimate concerns and States would make joint efforts to achieve common ends.

102. Mr. CISSE (Senegal) said that the Secretary-General's report proposing the elaboration of an agenda for development already constituted a valuable outline on which the document should be based. The international community's awareness of the need to enhance development cooperation was probably the reason for the preparation of the document. The agenda would ensure that the Organization's priorities were once again focused on development, while providing a critical assessment of the various international agreements, programmes of action and strategies for development. It should establish ways of ensuring the fulfilment of commitments entered into and should identify obstacles to the implementation of those instruments.

103. The agenda for development should incorporate such spheres of activity as the environment, by taking Agenda 21 into account, and social development, while ensuring that human beings remained at the centre of development concerns. Likewise, the participation of all groups in society, especially women, and the promotion of the right to development, as embodied in the Vienna Declaration adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, were crucially important. In that context, basic indicators, such as health, education, poverty, and income levels and distribution, should be taken into account.

(Mr. Cisse, Senegal)

104. His delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's approach, which consisted of viewing the agenda for development as a coordinating instrument, reflecting the will of the bodies of the United Nations system to work towards a common goal, while incorporating objectives and priorities reflected in more effective development activities and programmes.

105. In that context, the review and strengthening of relations between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions had proved necessary for enhanced coordination, especially with regard to resource mobilization for economic growth and development.

106. An agenda for development could propose specific actions to ensure strict compliance with international commitments involving poverty alleviation, external debt relief and easier access to international markets. The regional dimension of development should also be taken into account through proposals leading to the achievement of concrete results on the basis of foreign investment promotion, commodity diversification and debt relief.

107. An agenda for development should also provide for the reactivation of North-South cooperation, which should be conducive to a dialogue based on solidarity in the effort to achieve economic and social development. Such a programme of action should also establish objectives and priorities for revitalized South-South cooperation with a view to the reactivation of economic growth and sustainable development. Lastly, the agenda for development, by making it possible for the United Nations to recover its central role in international development cooperation, would enable it to promote an integrated approach to development and inter-agency coordination within the United Nations system.

108. Mr. JAYANAMA (Thailand) said that the various agreements on economic, environmental and social issues should be incorporated into an agenda for development. That document should serve as a basis for enhancing the coordination of activities within the United Nations system and between it and the Bretton Woods institutions and non-governmental organizations active in the development field.

109. Moreover, there was a need to review approaches to development. Countries and institutions concerned with that issue should attach greater importance to the concept of sustainable development centred on people. An agenda for development should go beyond the concept of development policy and should elaborate a more coherent and comprehensive strategy involving reconstruction, human rights, poverty alleviation, democratization and peace-keeping.

110. In that context, his delegation concurred with the approach reflected in the Secretary-General's report, which took into account both the similarities and the specific features of conditions in four groups of countries, namely, those with economies in transition, those affected by natural disasters, those in the midst of conflict and those recovering from conflict. Development support for those countries should focus on their specific requirements.

(Mr. Jayanama, Thailand)

111. The Secretary-General's report should be issued in early 1994, and an item relating to the agenda for development should be included in the agenda of the 1994 sessions of the Economic and Social Council and of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly; that would enhance the Council's role as the main coordinating mechanism for United Nations activities in the development field, while maintaining its close relationship with the Assembly, the Organization's chief policy-making body.

112. His delegation hoped that its views would contribute to the preparation of an agenda for development which would mark the beginning of a new process of dialogue among all development partners. It also hoped that the document would supplement "An Agenda for Peace" and would enable the United Nations system to carry out its functions internationally in promoting the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

113. Mr. BLANEY (United States of America) said that the request for an agenda for development had come at a most propitious time and that the United States strongly supported its elaboration. Not only did the ending of the cold war offer new opportunities substituting partnership for confrontation, but the United Nations system had recently taken measures to restructure the Secretariat in the economic and social fields and reform the Economic and Social Council; those initiatives were designed to reinvigorate the institutional framework for the implementation of such an agenda.

114. The elaboration of an agenda for development should focus on the creation of new partnerships for development and distribute the responsibilities among the partners. Donors should support the development plans of the recipient countries and endeavour to cooperate through such mechanisms as the UNDP donor round tables and the consultative groups of the World Bank. The recipient countries should endeavour to secure the full participation of their peoples. Marginalized members of society must be empowered politically and made full participants in economic activity. Human rights must be recognized and respected, in particular the rights of women, as the Vienna Conference had recently reaffirmed.

115. Three main elements formed the basis for effective and sustainable development: the pursuit of economic growth, the protection of the environment, and investment in people. Economic growth was usually a prerequisite for reducing poverty and attaining social progress. An open trading system was critical in that regard. But, while the liberalization of trade benefited all countries, most of them could considerably improve their economic performance by adopting more rational policies. The importance of free markets and private enterprise must be emphasized.

116. The world community must focus its attention on the human aspect. Illiteracy must be eliminated, and vocational training made more widely available; action must also be taken to combat illness and malnutrition and pathologies such as drug abuse and AIDS. Gender bias must also be eliminated, not only because that was a moral imperative but also because the empowerment of women was one of the most effective means of fighting poverty.

(Mr. Blaney, United States)

117. The focus on the human element should also take into account the importance of democracy, government accountability and popular participation because, as demonstrated by the examples of Botswana and Zimbabwe, countries which in the 1980s had escaped famine despite serious droughts, a rational and responsible policy focusing on the human being did produce dividends.

118. In recent years the world community had witnessed many positive examples of development. Many countries of Asia had made considerable progress both in economic growth and in reducing poverty and improving their social indicators. Obviously much still remained to be done, but efforts must be continued and lessons learned from those successes.

119. Mr. LOSADA FERNANDEZ (Spain) said that the third Ibero-American Conference of Heads of State and Government, held in Salvador, Brazil, in July 1993 had adopted in its Final Document a development programme which emphasized social development and contained a series of conclusions. The programme stressed that there could be no peace or security without economic and social development and highlighted the close interdependence between the concepts of development, democracy and human rights.

120. Development could not be uniform and must take into account the cultural heritages and vital forces of each society. But action to promote development and combat poverty was impossible without political stability, i.e. the consolidation of a democratic system and protection of human rights.

121. From that starting-point the Heads of State and Government had examined the most important elements of a development programme. They had defined an integrated concept of development encompassing its human, political, socio-economic and financial dimensions and focusing on the human being.

122. The United Nations was the most suitable forum for taking an integrated approach to the political, socio-economic and humanitarian aspects of the world problems. Spain therefore fully supported the convening of the forthcoming meetings on population, women and social development.

123. However, it was first necessary to produce an outline of what an agenda for development ought to be, and Spain looked forward to the report which the Secretary-General had promised for early 1994, for that was a necessary exercise warranting priority attention.

124. Mr. CALOVSKI (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that it was difficult to draw up an agenda for development, which was realistic and action-oriented, for there was as yet no consensus on basic policies for the world economy.

(Mr. Calovski, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

125. The rapid changes in the situation compelled the world community to make an effort to reach a new agreement for the development of international economic cooperation and relations among countries. As soon as the Uruguay Round was concluded, fresh negotiations should be started in order to take into account the new situation and, if necessary, existing agreements would have to be renegotiated.

126. Peace and development were inseparable. Development efforts could not be marginalized on account of the peace efforts. With the ending of the cold war it was easier to grasp the concept of a new world order and to give emphasis to prevention in the maintenance of international peace and security. The concept of preventive diplomacy had been accepted by all. All countries were against the emergence of new conflicts. An agenda for development should therefore be seen as a major instrument of the policy of preventive diplomacy.

127. That instrument should be focused on the approaches and themes mentioned in the note by the Secretary-General; but instead of merely defining and describing them, the agenda should propose follow-up actions and thus help to ensure that development continued to receive priority attention from the international community. If the agenda was to have a global scope, it must take into account the interests of all countries.

128. It was important to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the development field. The idea of making an agenda for development a major item at the next session of the Economic and Social Council was interesting, but it would be better for the document to be given a first reading in the Council and then examined in second reading at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly and adopted during the fiftieth anniversary year of the United Nations. That would make it possible to take into account the results of the Social Summit and the International Conference on Population and Development planned for 1994 and 1995 and to assess the implications of the completed Uruguay Round for the world economy. The discussions on an agenda for development ought to encourage countries to fight poverty and contribute to the efforts to resolve conflicts and secure respect for human rights. It should also enhance the efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.